

✓
A
L E T T E R

F R O M

TIMOTHY SOBERSIDES, 12

EXTINGUISHER-MAKER, AT WOLVERHAMPTON,

T O

JONATHAN BLAST,

BELLOWS-MAKER, AT BIRMINGHAM.

“ If thou blow the Spark, it shall burn :
“ If thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched.”

ECCLESIASTIC. ch. xxviii. v. 12.

“ There be three Things that mine Heart feareth :—the Slander]
“ of a City,—the gathering together of an unruly Multitude,—
“ and a false Accusation.” Ib. ch. xxvi. v. 5.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1792.

THE

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

OF

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

A
L E T T E R, &c.

DEAR COUSIN BLAST,

I Thank thee heartily for thy letters, giving me an account of the late strange doings in Birmingham, and for the books and printed papers thou hast now and then sent me on that business. Thou knowest I am an old man ; and though it is too late in the day for me to be busy, I like to sit in my chimney-corner, when my work is done, and hear my son Tom (who is apprentice to a bridle-bit forger) to read to me of what is doing in the world, while I smoke my pipe, and take my cup of home-brewed.

I have marvelled much at the tidings thou hast sent me. “ Birmingham,” said I to Tom, “ I have known
“ these threescore years ; and it was always famed for
“ its hard-working, peaceable, and neighbourly inhabitants. Now the world is turned upside down.
“ These quiet folks are all by the ears, and nobody
“ knows for what.” I have puzzled my brains to find out the reason of this wonderful change ; and sometimes I have thought one side to blame, and sometimes the other. When my neighbour *Spark*, the tallow-chandler, and *Obadiab Gape*, the parish clerk, came and told me first the news from Birmingham, that a plot had been found out, that the Presbyterians were to have blown

up the Churches, with gun-powder, and to have laid the King's-head in a charger, like John the Baptist's! thou can't not think how my old blood boiled. My pipe dropped from my mouth, while I, starting from my seat, snatched a spit from the fire-side, and told my neighbours that I was ready to go with them, and fight, for my Church and King. They then told me, I might sit down again, for the brave Birmingham boys had done the business cleverly, and all was safe. "I am
 " glad on't," (said I.) " Then I warrant, these traitors
 " are all taken up, and are to stand their trial for trea-
 " son. I hope they will meet with their deserts, which
 " can be no less than hanging." " Amen," said Obadiah.

" Destroy their false conspiracies,
 " That they may come to nought;
 " Subvert them in their heaps of sin,
 " Who have rebellion wrought."

" But I have not heard of any body having been
 " yet taken up for the plot. Meanwhile, the loyal
 " Birmingham men have burnt two or three Presbyte-
 " rian meeting-houses, and are now burning and pul-
 " ling down all the Presbyterians dwelling-houses as
 " fast as twenty thousand pair of hands can do the
 " business."

" And like an oven burn them, Lord,
 " In fiery flame and fume,
 " Thy anger shall destroy them all,
 " And fire shall them consume."

" What a blaze (said Spark) the great Presbyterian
 " tallow-chandlers houses will make! This will make
 " candles rise.—Church and King for ever, boys."

" Eh!

“ Eh ! (said I) houses burnt and pulled down by the
 “ mob, without trial of Judge or Jury ! I never heard
 “ the like. Do you say that none of the Plotters are
 “ taken up ? Belike they are run away.”

“ Yea, yea, (replied Obadiah) *our foes are turned into flight* ; but our fellow-churchmen had well nigh made a burnt sacrifice of the High Priest of the Presbyterians, the Guy Vaux of the Church, with his dark lanthorn and gunpowder, *Dr. Priestley* ; but he being a conjurer, flew away by the magical black art, or the power of Satan, in the form of a blue dragon, or, as others say, of a comet with a long fiery tail.”

“ Surely (said I) it must have been a horrible plot to
 “ have called down such vengeance. I wish all may
 “ have been right, for I never heard the like before.
 “ However, as you say, the King and the Churches,
 “ thank God, are all safe ; sit down, neighbours ; and
 “ tell me all you have heard of this wonderful business.”

Then they told how the plotters had met and dined at a public-house, called the Hotel, in Birmingham ; how a wicked hand-bill had been published, stirring up the people to rise against the Church and King ; what traitorous toasts, such as *Damnation to the King*, were drank at the Hotel ; how they kicked out of the room a loyal Justice of Peace ; how Dr. Priestley had stood at the Hotel-windows, preaching rebellion to the people, and many other strange tales. But how surprized was I, when the riots were all over, to hear that nobody knew any thing of the horrible plot ; that not one single plotter was taken hold of ; that all the talk about the toasts was found to be a lie, without any body daring to stand to it ; that the Justice of Peace had never been in

the room, nor tried to go into it; that Dr. Priestley had never been at the Hotel, nor had any more than one of all the folks whose houses had been burnt; and that others were at a great distance from home, while their houses were all in flames; that no treason or crime was laid at the doors of any of them; in short, that the whole upshot was, that a great many people of different sorts and religions, had met at a public-house in Birmingham, on the 14th of July, (as it seems others had done in London, and in many other towns in England, Scotland, and Ireland, without being troubled any where else) to rejoice at the French Revolution, as they call it, and that after they had dined and drunk the King's health, like good subjects, they went quietly home; while some wicked and malicious people, who pretended to be friends of the Church and King, but indeed were the greatest enemies to both, having taken a spite against the Presbyterians, or Dissenters, as they are called, took this opportunity of stirring up the mob, by most barefaced lies, to *commit* these horrible doings. God forgive them, and may they repent, whoever they be, that had such devil-like malice in their hearts! I see from Mr. Aris's paper, that some folks are so ill-natured as to say, that the Church-men were at the bottom of all this mischief. Now, I say, that is impossible; for I have been a Church-going man ever since I could walk, and I always heard Peace and Charity, and Love to our neighbours, preached up there; and even Forgiveness of our enemies. Besides, the High Bailiff says, he can prove, that the Riots were not caused by the people of the Church; so I suppose he knows who they were, and will surely tell us,

us, and inform against them. A while ago, we should have suspected the mischief to have been done by Papists; but now, we know they are as harmless people as need be. Will the Bailiff prove, that the Presbyterians burnt their own houses, to scandalise the Churchmen? No, that can't be; for the worthy Bailiff himself, along with the Justices and Parsons, sent printed papers among the mob, and called them by the kind name of *Friends* and *Fellow-Churchmen*. Now, if any body else had called them so, I should have been mighty angry, and thought that it was meant to black-guard the Church. For a true Church of England man, as these worthy Justices and Parsons well know, hates Persecution, loves Peace, is a good Christian, fears God, honours the King, does good to his neighbours, and harm to no man; forgives his enemies, avoids strife, discord, malice, and all uncharitableness, and "*blesse, but curses not.*"

I cannot call such good-for-nothing fellows as the rioters, or those who set them on, *Churchmen*, whatever they may call themselves. I do not believe they know much of the inside of a Church, or can say their Catechism. I dare say, the Bailiff, who, I hear, is a worthy man, has found out that they were *Heathens*, and that they *worship the Devil*; and so far from caring about the Church, I fear that if there should be any outcry among the people about *Tythes*, (which may, sometime or another, make the country-folks rise, unless the Parliament should give the Parsons as good in some other way,) they will as soon pull down the Churches and Parsons houses, as they did those of the Presbyterians. Plunder and mischief are their game,

and let any master-man cry *halloo*, off they will spring, and follow the scent, like so many blood-hounds.

Those were the true Church-of-England men, who, like the good Samaritan, received into their houses, and took care of those who were so cruelly treated, at the hazard of their own property, as the advertisement in the news-papers from the Presbyterians, thanking these generous neighbours, witnesses. Doubtless many good and pious Churchmen all over England, would have done the same. It therefore signifies nothing whether these wicked creatures say they belong to one religion or another. Their actions belong to no Church or Religion. Every man is answerable for the malice of his own heart, and nobody else; and when we shall be called to give an account of our lives, then, as my neighbour *Hoop*, the Cooper, says, "*Every tub must stand on its own bottom.*"

But you say, that these Presbyterians or Dissenters, as they call themselves, have brought all this mischief on their own heads, and have themselves to thank for it. But patience, good Cousin Blast, don't blow so fast: *there are more words than one to a bargain.* Let us consider whether there be any truth or sense in this saying of yours, which has been so often said and said again, that some folks at length believe it. For a *Sentence got by rote, is a Reason to a Fool; but is only the ringing of a bell, to a wise man.*

How then did these Dissenters bring the mischief on themselves? First, you say, they set on foot the meeting at the *Hotel*, to drink success to the French Revolution.

Now, Cousin, let us leave to wiser heads than yours

and mine to settle, whether the French Revolution be a good or a bad thing, and whether we ought to be glad or sorry for it. All that we can know of it is, that tho' the Parliament-man Burke has told us, that it could not go on, and tho' the news-papers have been every day saying that it was on the point of being overturned; yet the upshot is, that it has gone on, and is now finished and settled, with the consent of their King, and to the great joy of all the French people; that there are now no more dark prisons or *bastiles*, nor *iron cages*, to shut up poor men in all their lives, against whom some proud court-man happens to take a spite, without Judge or Jury; and that these idle court-men, who never worked or did good to any body, can now no longer live, wallowing in pomp and gluttony, at the expence of the poor working men, who had not enough left to fill their bellies withall; so that they looked like so many walking skeletons; as if the drones of a bee-hive were to eat all the honey, while the pretty little busy working bees were to have nothing to live on but the trash called bees-bread. But, on the contrary, every poor man does *now* enjoy the fruit of his own labour.

Surely, these French must know better than we, what they like and is good for them; at least it is their business to choose for themselves. God send every thing may turn out for the best, and that we may not be eternally plagued with wars, as we used to be formerly, from the pride and greediness of the Kings and courtiers of France; by which wars our taxes have been made so high, that every pot of beer we drink, costs us almost twice as much as it would have done, if we had lived in peace and good neighbourhood with the French.

But the French Revolution is not our business now to think of. The only question is, Whether there be any *law* against people meeting together, and drinking Success to the French Revolution, or not? Now, nobody pretends that there is such a law; and you know it is the birth-right of an Englishman, to do what he pleases, if he does not break any of the laws of the land. Then, in God's name, let them eat and drink their fill, so that they pay for it.

“ Aye, but (you say) they drank *Damnation to the King*.—Did they so? Then let them be tried for Treason, and punished, if guilty. But we now know that this is all a lie, contrived, like many others of the same sort, to set the mob on. But there is not one of those people who were so busy in spreading these lies, dare set their face to them now.

You say also, that a wicked and traitorous hand-bill had been printed, abusing the King and the Government. I wish the rascal who wrote or published it, may be caught, tried, and hanged, if the law will hang him. But God knows who wrote it. Don't let us hang the first man we meet for it, without his being first tried and found guilty. That indeed would be what is called *Lidford Law—first hang and draw—then hear the cause*.

The Revolution folks published an advertisement, denying that hand-bill, and declaring their loyalty to the King. But supposing the author was found out, and that it proved to be a Presbyterian or a Jew, must the mob be therefore set on to burn all the Presbyterians or all the Jews? What kind of justice do you call that? If a Churchman (I mean such a one as the worthy Justices and Parsons call their Fellow-Churchmen) were found

found out in stealing, are therefore all Churchmen to be called and treated as thieves? Because the Rev. Dr. *Dodd* was hanged for forgery, and the Rev. Mr. *Hickman* for murder, are all parsons to be supposed forgers and murderers? Is a whole flock to be condemned for one scabby sheep? No, no. Our English law knows better. Let us abide by the *Law*. Our liberty, property, religion, and lives, depend on that. When we trample on the law, we trample on the King, whose business it is to execute the law. If any man offends, let him be tried by a Judge and a Jury, and punished, if guilty; but let no man, or set of men, be hunted down by a mob, like a dog, that some spiteful boy calls, *mad dog! mad dog!* Secondly, you say, these Presbyterians have been plotting against the Church and State, and have been writing traitorous books.—May be so, I say; and it may not be so; for in these times, a hundred lies are told for one true story. — However, if they, or any body else attack the King or his Government, by words or blows, there are laws enough to defend them: and the King has strength enough to execute these laws. He has Magistrates, Constables, Judges, and Soldiers, when they are wanted. If all these should not be sufficient, there is no fear but his people will be ready to help him. Doubtless you and I, old as I am, and every true Englishman, would rise to defend the King, whom we all love, as much as ever a King was loved, as we showed by our rejoicing at his recovery from his illness. But nothing like a plot has been found out; not a stone of any Church in England has been pulled down; though a talking Parliament-man has said all he could to persuade the King and the people,

people, that some terrible mischief was brewing, and so has set the nation a quarrelling; frightening *placemen* and *pensioners*, lest they should lose their places and pensions, and be obliged to work for their bread; frightening the *Lords*, lest they should be changed into simple Squires; terrifying the *Bishops*, lest they should be turned back again into plain parish parsons; and the poor honest parsons, lest they should be obliged to divide their *pluralities*, as I think they are called, and tythe-pigs, with their curates; of all which Frenchified reformatations, God knows there is no likelihood of their coming to pass; but he being a great spokesman, persuaded many folks, that they were just at hand.—Then came the American *Thomas Payne*, piping hot from France, with his book on the *Rights of Man*, shewing that all that the Parliament-man had said about the French Revolution, was neither sense nor truth; and if he had stopped here, no harm would have been done. But what business has this American to crack his jokes upon Kings and Crowns in this country? Let him keep them for America, where Kings and Crowns are not in fashion. But in England, we choose to have them; and I hope Thomas Payne will never put us out of conceit with them. For my part, I think, that both the Parliament-man and the American have done a deal of mischief; but I would not, for all that, burn their houses. Perhaps if they were tossed together in a blanket, such gentle correction might do good to both, and after a few rubs against each other, belike they might settle matters together, somewhere between, what they talk so much about, *Republicanism* and *Arbitrary Power*.

Lord, Coz, what a strange fellow this Thomas Payne is, if we believe the Life that is printed of him. But who knows what to believe, when people are so hot-headed and violent as they are now * ?

Who can believe, think you, what is there said of Thomas Payne, that he, a stout young fellow, should lie seven years by a handsome wife, without doing as a man should do. God forgive me, but old as I am, I can't help thinking of the song that I used to sing at our club, when I was a young gay fellow :

He that will not merry merry be,
 With a pretty Lass in bed,
 Let him be laid in the church-yard,
 And I put in his stead :
 Let him be merry merry there,
 While I am merry merry here ;
 Who knows where we shall be,
 To be merry another year ?

Well, if that really be Thomas Payne's way, I would advise him to study the *Rights of Woman*, which may be the title of his next book ; which, as he seems to be a sharp fellow, will, no doubt, teach a good lesson to our wives and daughters.

Thirdly, it is said, that the Dissenters write wicked books against the holy Trinity. For my part, I love none of your new-fangled religious opinions, though I am told *they* pretend that they are the oldest of all. I know of no good that these *controversies*, I think they call them,

* This Life is said, in the Title, to be written by Thomas Oldis ; but the Analytical Review says, there is no such man ; and as the writer begins with lying, probably he goes on in the same way to the end.

do to us. I don't believe they make us a bit wiser though they teach us to talk a great deal about what we don't understand. The wisest of us knows no more than the Bible tells us. Some will turn texts one way, and some another; and it is easy to puzzle plain folks with Greek and Hebrew. But for my part, I shall believe every text, not according to this man's or the other man's fancy, but in the way it was meant when it was spoken, without pretending to explain or understand things above my reach. As good Queen Bess said:

And what the Word doth make it,
That I believe, and take it.

But though I myself don't like these sorts of disputes, other folks may take delight in them; and I have no right to say to another man, that he must not write or read them. And I am sure that I have no right to burn a man for writing or reading them. So that he does not force me to believe what he believes, or to read what he writes, let him write on as long as he pleases. Thank God, every man, in this land of liberty, may think for himself, and may say what he pleases; so that he does not abuse and tell lies of his neighbours. If ever we should no longer have leave to do that, then good bye to *old English Liberty*; we must then be put in cages, to whistle only such tunes as our masters please. But I hope that day will never come. Our fathers fought, as the history-books tell us, and bled for this Liberty; and shall we be so cowardly as give it up to a parcel of *Tories*, and *fawning courtmen*, who cry up *passive obedience* and *non-resistance*, and such jacobite stuff? No, no, let us live

and die by the maxims of the good *old Whigs*, who sent the Pretender a packing, because he would not let us think and speak for ourselves, but forsooth, would force us all to be Papists like himself; and who brought in King William, and our King George's family, to protect and defend us against the Jacobites and Tories; which they have done all along, and will, I hope, ever continue to do. But some folks say, that the Whigs are going out of fashion, and that the Tories are coming into favour. But I hope not; and I say, God defend His Majesty from Jacobites and Tories, and all Tory principles. They ruined our last race of Kings, and will never thrive in England.

Lastly, great fault is found with the Presbyterians, because they have endeavoured to get a repeal of the *Test Act*, as they call it, which prevents them from being made excise-men, and getting other good places under Government, to which they say they have a right, as they pay taxes, and can read and write as well as other people. Others say, that in that case they would get the upper-hand in Parliament, and make us all Presbyterians. That I think is impossible, as there are at least ten Churchmen to one Presbyterian.

For my part, I will no more be made a Presbyterian by compulsion, than I will be circumcised for a Jew. Let every man go to Heaven his own way, say I. I will keep in the Church-road, as I think it best, or as good as any. Let others choose for themselves the road to Heaven. Good men of all religions will, I hope, meet there by whatever road they may come. For the Bible tells us, "*There is no difference between the Jew*
and the Greek, for the same Lord is rich unto all that
 B shall

“ *shall call upon him.*” And again it says, “ *In my Father’s house are many mansions.*” So I hope there will be room for more folks than many people think of, if they would but be neighbourly, and not jostle one another.

But how did the Dissenters endeavour to get this Test Act repealed? By plots or by force?—No.—How then?—By petition to Parliament.—Well, there can be no harm in that; and no fault can be found with them: for every body has a right to petition Parliament; and if the Parliament does not choose to grant their petition, they must remain as they are: that’s the end on’t.

When I found that all the stories that had been raised about toasts, and plots, and conspiracies, were false; that the Presbyterians all over England, and every body else, were as quiet as they have been these hundred years, so that the mob in Birmingham had been driven on a *wrong scent*, as we say in hunting, for which some of the poor hounds have been prosecuted by the King, (so far was he from thinking them his friends) and hanged, I was in hopes that all the bustle would be over, and be only a nine days wonder. But sorry I am to find, from what you say, that an evil spirit still continues among some wrong-headed or mischief-loving men, as I see plain enough, from the printed paper you sent me, dated *Constitutional Taven*, October 17. From that paper I see there is a great desire to pick a quarrel with the Presbyterians, if any pretence can be found. This paper begins with a wish for peace, and ends with a terrible threatening of another riot; like a picture that I have seen of the Devil, with a handsome face, but claws

at

at his feet, and a sting at his tail. It then finds fault with some book, written, as they believe, by some Presbyterian, and printed by one *Belcher*, in Deritend, in which we are told, that *the Clergy are aspersed by implication*, or some such hard word, as being the occasion of the late riots in Birmingham. Now it seemed to me as a very unlikely tale, that any Clergyman, who you know is a preacher of the religion of peace, should set on a mob to burn and plunder the houses of their countrymen, or should do any wickedness, such as writing this rascally paper from the Constitutional Tavern, defending the late riots, and threatening more of the same kind.— And even if *some one* of them, out of all the number, should forget himself, (for, though they be parsons, they are but flesh and blood, like ourselves, God pity them,) who could believe so of the Clergy *in general*? I should as soon believe a man who should tell me that the parsons had come down from their pulpits, and danced from one end of the Church to the other, on a slack-rope, for the entertainment of their congregation, calling it a religious dance, in imitation of King David.—So I bade my news-man buy this book for me, that I might see what wicked lies the enemies of the Clergy had trumped up. But I could find nothing like what was said to be in the book. The Clergy are indeed here said to have pointed out some of Dr. Priestley's notions, as dangerous to the Church and State. But in doing this, they did no more than their bounden duty, if they really thought so. Dr. Priestley has a right to give his notions; and surely so have the Clergy, like every body else. But that is not driving the mob to burn the Doctor, or

his house. The book then tells how certain *mischievous thinkers* persuaded *the unthinking actors*, that Dr. Priestley meant to blow up the Churches with his gunpowder. Now it is sure enough that these unthinking actors, as they are called, did *believe*, or *pretend to believe so*, and it is clear, that a good deal of *mischievous thinking* was used, to persuade the mob to do mischief, for the *strange* and *far-fetched lies* could not have been contrived without thinking; neither could the *forged letters* that were read to the people, stirring them up to do more mischief. But the book does not say, that these mischievous-thinkers were Clergymen. They are not the only thinkers in the world; and surely other people are as likely to think of mischief, as men whose calling obliges them to think of, and preach Christianity. I was glad to find no such lies in the book, though I know no more of the author than I do of the man in the moon. But suppose it had been said, that the Clergy, or rather that some one man among them, had shewn more zeal for the Church than Christian charity, by some *nameless* book-maker, who like *Not* the button-burnisher, and the writer of the paper dated Constitutional Tavern, shoot their arrows, poisoned with falsehood from behind a bush; surely these holy teachers of the Gospel would have fallen on a better way of clearing up their characters, than by threatening not only the Presbyterians, but also all the other peaceable people of Birmingham, with more burning and plundering.

Was it thus that our divine pattern, the Prince of Peace, bore the false tales and the ill usage of his enemies?

enemies? Did he call down fire from the skies to burn them; or *lions* from their dens to devour them?

Then this paper harps upon the old *nonsense* about Mr. R.'s list of toasts, and his talk with the master of the Hotel; matters which signify not a straw to any of us. When I see these tavern-men harping on such trumpery, that they may find some fault with the Presbyterians, and some reason for threatening them with another riot, they put me in mind of the old fable of the *Wolf*, who wished to pick a quarrel with a *Lamb*; that he might have a pretence of worrying it.

“ You make the water of the stream muddy that I am drinking,” says the Wolf.

“ How can that be, good Mr. Wolf? (replies the Lamb) since the stream runs from you to me.”

“ I remember you; (said the Wolf) *you drank damnation to me* two years ago.”

“ Alas! (answered the Lamb) I was not born then.”

“ Then (said the Wolf, in a passion) it was your father, or some of your relations, and thus you shall suffer for them, you Presbyterian rascal!” So saying, the furious beast tore the poor lamb to pieces.

Thus these tavern-men, after trying to pick a quarrel about this and that and t'other thing, that nobody cares for, come forth with the following terrible worrying sentence, enough to frighten all the old women and young children of the parish.

“ It might be expected from the very marked opinion of the people at large, (in this place especially) have shewn of the *principles of the Dissenters*, that some small portion of modesty would at least for the present

“ have been testified by them. How far this is the
 “ case, let the numerous scandalous publications,
 “ which are circulating by the medium of the post,
 “ or otherwise, bear witness.

“ *But let them beware!*

“ THE ARM OF LOYALTY has been raised against
 “ them.

“ Their *present deportment* is in proof, that it was
needful.

“ The BOLT, though shot, is not *entirely spent*, and
 “ the people at large have too much affection for
 “ their King, and reverence for the present Govern-
 “ ment, to suffer either of them to be attacked, with
 “ impunity, by the arts of the seditious.

“ The LION is too magnanimous to trample on the
 “ *fallen.*

“ *Misuse not* then his noble nature, YE DISSENTERS!
 “ —for *if ye again arouse him*——your Commentator,
 “ Mr. K. may *explain the consequences.*”

Fine words truly, and bold! Surely these tavern-
 men must have had two or three pots of ale extraordi-
 nary, to have screwed up their *noble natures* so high.
 But still, they have forgot one little matter to put their
 courage out of question,—*they have forgot to sign their*
 NAMES.

Truly, Cousin Jonathan, you have fine blades
 among you, who are not contented, it seems, with the
 mischief that has been done, but are calling out for
 more. They threaten some terrible *consequences*, and
 leave it to Mr. K. to explain their meaning. But as
 he, belike, mayn't care a fig for *them*, or their *conse-*
quences;

quences! if you do not rightly take it in, I will try to make out the meaning to you as well as I can, although I wish they had spoken their mind in plainer English and better Grammar, and not ranted so like a Tragedy-speech, that I can't help thinking how finely Dick Spouter would mouth it at our club, if he would get it by heart, to make us merry withall: for he is used to act the part of the *Lion*, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and roars like any *Nightingale*, as the play says.

What a fine thing it is to be a Scholar! to call the *riots*, which we all know was burning and plundering houses, and murdering constables, by so many fine names. First, they are called the *Arm of Loyalty*. Then, this *Arm* is changed into a *Bolt*, that was shot, and has been flying in the air ever since the 14th of July, for "it is not yet spent." Last of all, this *flying Bolt* is turned into a *Lion*, who is happily now at rest, but is ready to jump and devour you all on the first word from his keepers.

What impudent dogs these riot-makers are, to talk about the King, as if he was on their side. Did not the King, God bless him, put a stop to the last riots, by sending soldiers with extraordinary dispatch? Did not he make proclamation, offering a hundred guineas reward to those who should inform against any of the rioters and their setters-on? Did not he order them to be taken up, and tried all at his own expence? And did not he make his Sheriffs and hangmen hang as many as were thought enough for an example, to prevent such doings in time to come, and to shew the people

that the King would not look upon such wretches as his friends, but would punish them according to law?

But, if they should go to their old pranks again, woe be to them; for they cannot now pretend that they are cheated and bamboozled into a belief of plots. They can have no plea now, to save their necks from the halter.

These Tavern-men tell us, that the late riots were *needful*, and were the uplifting of the *arm of Loyalty*. If this were the case, what a sin and shame it is, that so many of the Tavern-men's friends should have been hanged for doing what is *needful*! How could the King punish those who lifted up their *loyal arms*!

Then they tell us, that the *bolt is shot, but not spent*; that is, that more mischief is in store, more riots are needful, and more loyal arms to be raised. But if it should so happen, we may foretell, that *more loyal necks will be hanged*.

Next, we are told, that the LION may be roused again, and that, if the Presbyterians do any thing to offend these Tavern-men, they will let out this Lion upon them. Who is this *Lion*, this *fierce beast*, that is to devour the Presbyterians? Who do you think it is, now, Jonathan, but you and the other workmen in Birmingham, who are to be stirred up by lies, to make another *riot*, like the last (for it is the *same* bolt that was shot, but is not spent); and to burn, plunder, and, belike, murder.—Some time ago, the Derby folks nettled some people, by calling the rioters, and their setters-on, the *savages of Birmingham*, because savages, or wild men, have no laws or government, but kill, burn, and steal,

as their hatred and anger drive them on. But now these Tavern-men give a worse name than *savages* to you and your fellow-workmen: they give you the name of a *wild beast*, which ought to be kept in a cage; and they pretend that they themselves are your *masters* and *keepers*; and can chain you up and muzzle you, or let you loose, as *they* please. But I hope that you and your honest fellow-workmen will shew that you are not *wild beasts*, nor such ninnies as to be caught twice with the same chaff, and get yourselves hanged, to please the spiteful temper of any man; but that you will prove to be good men, peaceable subjects, and true Christians, and that you will never let yourselves be hurried away, you know not whither or for what, but that you will *look twice before you leap once*.

Who are these tavern-men? Is there really any *Constitutional Tavern*, or *Lion's Den*, where any number of men meet to hatch mischief, and disturb the peace of the town? Is there any such *Spit-fire Club*? or is this paper the contrivance of some one or two of those mischief-loving busy-bodies, who write abusive letters without names; for, I verily believe, although many people are too hot, yet very few could be found wicked enough to write this paper. Whoever they be, they are cunning enough, it seems, to conceal their names. They will, forsooth, keep themselves safe and snug in their den, while they send out *their Lion* to do the mischief, and get his reward for it! But, for my part, I believe their *Lion* is all a sham; they have no beast so foolish as to do what they bid him, but have only an *Ass* dressed up in a lion's skin, which brays their nonsensical stuff, to frighten fools like themselves.

You

You have given me a hint, in your postscript to your last letter, that there is a *hidden cause* for all this violence and party-doings ; that some folks are angry, that certain leading men have been informed against, of not having done their duty at the late riots, or of doing what was no man's duty. For my part, I know nothing of the matter, who is right, or who is wrong : but I know, that if any man is tried by the laws of his country, and no violence offered to him, there can be no harm in that. If he is innocent, we need not fear but an honest Warwickshire jury will acquit him ; and, if he is guilty, who will dare to say, such doings should pass unpunished ? Why should not the laws be executed on ~~leading~~ or topping men, as well as on those poor fellows who have had less means of knowing what is right and what is wrong ? Though we are poorer than they, and must work while they feast and guzzle, are they to be allowed to drive us headlong to the gallows, for their spites and humours, while they sit safe, drinking their toasts, and, for want of something to do, hatching mischief ? No, no ; the same law is for the rich, as well as the poor. I heartily wish these men, whoever they be, may prove their innocence, which will be more to their credit than if they were always to lie under the slur of having encouraged the rioters, some way or another. But this can only be done by some sort of trial ; and we need not fear any harm to them ; for I am told by an attorney's clerk, that, if there are to be any trials, they will be by order of the King, who, you know, is bound by his crownation oath, to protect all his subjects, and to keep the peace ; and who, like a good King, as he is, is determined to do so, and

to teach us, that the great and the small are alike answerable for their behaviour; for the greater any man is, the more mischief he can do. Thus the wise man, Solomon, says, *As the matter of fire is, so it burneth; and as a man's strength, so is his wrath; and according to his riches, his anger riseth; and the stronger they are which contend, the more they will be inflamed.* Ecclesiasticus, ch. 28. Therefore, every good subject is bound to tell what he knows of these doings, that we may have no more such in time to come, but may live peaceably together, every man minding his own work, as Christian folks ought to do. I can see no reason, then, why this business should keep up an evil spirit among you: on the contrary, I think good men, of all sides, ought to join in keeping the King's peace, in bringing all wickedness to light, and in clearing the innocent. To them I would say,

“Ye good men of all sorts, set your faces against violence and threats, and against all occasions of stirring up mischief, without minding whether it comes from one side or another. Make a party, since people are so fond of parties, in favour of the law, peace and justice.”

To the *pious, but over-zealous Churchmen*, I would say, “You have now found that your fears were groundless, and the alarms that were sounded in your ears were false. The *Church* can be in no danger, while there are so many more churchmen than any thing else; nor can it be blown down, like the *walls of Jericho*, by the sound of Presbyterians sermons and books, which are all the trumpets they have;

so

to that you may safely continue to enjoy its benefits, or so ride on the ridge of it, as long as you please, for all the Presbyterians can do, especially if you would but yourselves take care to mend any little flaws and cracks that the wind and weather may have made in it. When your fears are quieted, I trust, your love to your neighbours will return, and that you will prove yourselves true Christians and *true* churchmen, in *deeds*, as well as in *name*."

To the *Presbyterians* or *Dissenters*, I would say, "*Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, as a roaring LION, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*"

To the *writer*, or *writers*, of the *threatening* paper dated from the Constitutional Tavern, I would say, "If any mischief happens, those who suffer will know where to look for the ring-leaders, even in the *Lion's den*.—Your BOLT (you say) is not yet spent; neither is all the HEMP in the kingdom. *But a Fool's bolt is soon shot.*"

To you, *Cousin Blast*, and your *honest fellow-workmen of Birmingham*, I say, "Mind your work, avoid evil counsellors, and keep out of harm's way; and, of whatever religion you call yourselves, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Papists, Methodists, Baptists, or Anabaptists, Quakers, New Jerusalem, or Old Jerusalem, or any of the hard words ending in *arians*, or *inians**, believe me, you will no more ride to heaven upon

* I suppose old Timothy means by *arians* and *inians*, the Trinitarians, Unitarians, Arians, Predestinarians, Socinians, and many more, about all which I am continually printing books.—*A note by the Printer.*

“ these *names*, than a witch will upon a broom-stick,
“ unless you keep the *Ten Commandments*, and also
“ the commandment which the Lord and Saviour of
“ us all, whatever names we go by, gave, when he
“ said,

“ *This is my commandment, that you love one another*
“ *as I have loved you.*”

Farewell, dear Jonathan. Give my service to your
honest fellow-workmen, and tell them, I am their
well-wisher, and your loving cousin,

TIMOTHY SOBERSIDES.

y
t
y
b
C
n

fo
L

da
“
“
“
“
“
“

of
“
“
“
“
“
“
“

*
nitar
more
by th

